





"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE."

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A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO,

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ST. JOHN, xvii., 20, 21.—Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

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The great and significant events which have taken place in the world during the past year, must have raised in every thoughtful mind the enquiry, what practical effect will they have upon that glorious consummation, to which every Christian soul must look forward and desire, the general establishment throughout the world of the kingdom of our Redeemer. We have seen India delivered, as we trust, from that blighting sovereignty of Christian men, ashamed to confess the name of Jesus, and encouraging idolatry equally with the faith of which they were professed believers. We have seen the vast empire of China, with the important islands of Japan,—so long closed against the name of Christ,—thrown open to the free and undisturbed dissemination of the gospel. And we cannot but look forward with hope, though mingled with anxiety, to see whether that Gospel will actually in our own time spread and be established in the hearts of those now heathen populations.

But, as I have said, the hopes of the thoughtful must be mingled with anxiety. Will the free license given by treaties be faithfully carried out? Will governments be able to restrain the passions of their people,—when, as in the earlier progress of Christianity, endangered and baffled priesthoods shall work upon the lovers of showy and amusing superstitions, and raise them in violence against the promoters of a spiritual religion? Will the Gospel be accepted by the heathen in a form scriptural and apostolical, or in a form too slightly removed from the superstitions of heathenism, or in the varying and discordant forms by which its profession is disfigured in this northern

continent? Nay, may not the reception of any form of the Gospel be hindered by the differing and discordant aspects under which it will be presented to the heathen? Has not this already been the case in British India? Has not the labor and zeal of many earnest men been thrown away, because it has prevented the gospel from exhibiting to the heathen one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and (we may add) one Holy Catholic Church?

Might we not augur that this *would* be the case from the very text which I have read to you? If our Lord himself, in his last prayer with his disciples and for his people before his crucifixion, made the hope of the world's conversion rest upon the unity of his people,—if he prayed that those who believed on him might be one, with this special end in view, as the result of their unity, that the world by that means might believe that God had sent him,—must it not follow irresistibly that the visible want of unity of Christians entering on the missionary field in the East, shall be a hindrance to the heathen's believing in Him?

Nor can it be said with truth that although there may be a visible disunion, there will be a union of faith and love. In some respects, no doubt, and to some extent, this may be so. But is it not the fact that those of other communions do actually disparage the efforts made by our own Church amongst the heathen? Can we ourselves,—however much we may feel it our duty to acknowledge that it is a benefit that Christ should be preached even by those who are in error—can we in conscience look with equal pleasure upon efforts which will tend to hinder, more or less, that which we believe to be Christ's pure gospel? Does not the outward disunion but too faithfully exhibit the inward? Would not the outward disunion cease if we could get rid of the inward? Nay, does not St. Paul teach us that our being originally called *in one body*, is with a special view to the *peace* which would be the natural and proper result of our being so called, when he says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body?" And therefore, when Christians are divided into separate bodies, must it not so far defeat that end and hinder peace?

Our hopes then must needs be mixed with fears, and we shall sometimes sadly reflect how differently we might have availed ourselves of this great opening, if those who believe in Jesus could but have acted as one united body, upon the self-same principles, and with the selfsame organization, upon the heathen populations now opened to us.

But it would be folly to spend our hearts in idle regrets. The sorrow of a wise man, much more of a Christian, should always be a practical sorrow. If we see an evil existing, we must consider how we can contribute to remove it, or how we can avoid contributing to perpetuate it. If there is an evil pervading the whole number of those who believe, it can scarcely be that we are free from it. Nay, is it not a fact that the evil of division does prevail all around ourselves, and that it produces the same effects which we have augured from it elsewhere? Does not every experienced clergyman know that one great reason why multitudes of our Canadian youth, although they may be nominally believers in Jesus, have little practical faith, and do not go on in the path of life, is that, in the multiplicity of denominations, they do not know to which to unite themselves.

If then we believe, as we do, that we are a true branch of Christ's Church, we must desire that we may be freed from the evil that hinders the salvation of the world; that we, at least, may not contribute to hinder that salvation; that all our apparently church-like work may not be a mere kindling our own fire, and compassing ourselves with sparks of our own making; and that we may not have the miserable recompense at the end of our course, that we shall lie down in the deep sorrow of knowing that it is not the Lord's work we have been doing, but only our own, and consequently that our sparks and we shall equally go out together.

Nor is the gravity of the case lessened by the consideration that we have some disunion amongst ourselves,—that although externally united, and, blessed be God, to a large extent inwardly united likewise, there are still barriers between heart and heart; that even with us, *Ephraim* is too apt to *envy Judah*, and *Judah* to *vex Ephraim*; and that so surely as that is the case,

so surely *do* we hinder the salvation of some around us,—and so surely, likewise, *do* we contribute to keep up that spirit of disunion which our all-wise Saviour foresaw would hinder the conversion of the world.

And, if these considerations are important at all times, surely they are most important when we are entering upon a work, which from the imperfection of human nature, has a peculiar tendency to draw out the disunion which may be in our hearts ; —I mean the work of free and open discussion, in a representative body, when human passions are easily raised, when a single word may act as a spark to kindle a fire which soon gets beyond the control of him who kindled it.

It is to this subject, my dear brethren, that I would desire to direct your attention at this time ; and may that Holy Spirit, who in all his gifts and ministrations is *one and the same Spirit*, turn our hearts, at this time especially, to desire *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. And that I, after the ability which God has given me, may work together with him, I purpose to draw out and set before you, from the **Holy Word** which He inspired, such considerations and such means as may tend to give us all that unity of spirit, both in the deliberations upon which we are soon to enter, and in all the work of our future lives.

I.—1. First, then, if we wish to avoid division, *we must make unity of mind a definite and habitual object*. Nothing less than that can be the meaning of St. Paul, when he says, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.” Allow me to repeat those words, so remarkable, when we compare them with the language and spirit of our own age and of our own race ; “that ye all speak the same thing ; and that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgement.” Am I wrong in saying that there are few of our countrymen who would have thought of addressing this language to an assembly of their countrymen, if they had not found it in the Scripture ? Am I wrong in thinking that a majority of us, if we expressed



our own natural involuntary thoughts, would think such advice entirely thrown away, because impossible to be realized? Are we not in the habit of praising men for their independence of mind? And do we not mean by this, that it is a commendable thing, a sign of strength of mind, to form our opinion by ourselves, independently of what may be thought by others. This, surely, is the character which as a nation we most admire. And no doubt individuality and self-reliance is one especial characteristic which God has stamped on our race; and therefore there are good ends to be accomplished by this particular feature of our character. To this in part are due the energy and enterprise and success which God has granted to us. But if *one* feature of a *whole* human character is cherished and cultivated to the exclusion of others, then those in whom such disproportionate importance is given to it must become one-sided in character, and thus an excellency is turned into a fault.

And this is actually the case with our independence, when it is brought to work within the precincts of the church and in connexion with God's truth. The truths of the gospel are not man's but God's; and, therefore, in the church we are required not to cherish independence of mind, but to speak the same thing, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgement.

Let us realize this, then, as a duty. Let us realize it as an object to be aimed at,—as an object of our soul's desire. And when we can do this, how many will come to see that whilst they have prided themselves on their inflexible adherence to truth, on their earnestly contending for the faith, they have never once realized the duty incumbent on them of *endeavouring*, at least, to speak the same thing as their fellow-Christians, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgement.

2. And let us remark the fulness of the language. We must *endeavour to speak the same thing*. We of the United Church are privileged in being trained from our childhood in speaking the same thing, in the language of our Catechism and Prayer-book, and of our doctrinal professions. But we must carry this principle further than this; we must endeavour to carry it so

far as in truth we can. One result will be that we shall not, as some do, attach ourselves to the language of the Prayer-book, to the disparagement of that in the Articles; nor, as others, attach ourselves to that of the Articles, to the setting aside of that in the Prayer-book; but we shall take both as merely expressing different phases of the same truth, which is embodied equally in both.

Again, we must not so attach ourselves to some particular words and phrases, or so set ourselves against others, merely on the ground of our taste and feeling, that we hold only to the one, and utterly refuse to use the other. And yet how has this practical result of the Scriptural precept been neglected by many on all sides! There seems to be scarcely any school of persons who gain a strong perception of any truth or set of truths, but they immediately begin to embody that perception in some peculiarity of language. This language becomes adopted by their followers, and thus becomes the watchword of a party; and whoever speaks it is a friend, and whoever does not speak it is not a friend. And on the other hand, when particular words are thus adopted as party badges, those who do not wish to identify themselves with such a party carefully avoid the use of those words, however innocent, useful, or expressive in themselves.

Surely, my dear brethren, in view of God's will, as embodied in this sentence of St. Paul, we must own that this is wrong; and that, if we wish to obey this injunction, we shall avoid confining ourselves to any special phraseology; that we shall no longer refuse to use words and phrases, because they are used by those with whom we disagree; that we shall use all right and expressive language, from whatever quarter it comes, and by the use of various language, seek to find entrance for God's truth into the minds of different classes of men.

But the apostle not only exhorts us to speak the same thing, but *to be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement*; and this must show us that, however hopeless the task may appear, we must *endeavour* to attain this unity. It is impossible that a divine precept should be given, that it may be thrown away; and therefore it is obviously our duty to

make this an object of our minds, our hearts and our endeavours. Let us consider, therefore, a while, what other steps we can take which will help us to an approximation to the end we are required to aim at.

3. It seems an obvious suggestion that no human being, nor any single set of men, can reasonably suppose that they have with them the *whole* truth, and that there is no truth with those who differ with them. It seems, therefore, reasonable to suppose that there is no view held by honest and intelligent Christian men, but what has some truth in it. It seems therefore a means towards being of the same mind and of the same judgment, *that we should not shut up our minds and hearts from those*, especially within the limits of our own Church, *who differ from us*, but that we should desire to learn whether there be not some truth in their views, and what that truth is; that we should endeavour, at all events, to understand their reasons, and see whether those reasons are well founded. In this way we may prove all things and hold fast that which is good. In this way we shall often be led to fill up our own imperfect views of truth, and come to hold the whole truth as it is in Jesus. In this way, likewise, we shall often be able to impart of our gift to others, who, when they see us willing to learn, may become willing to learn from us.

4. Another very important aid to drawing together will be *if we acquire more of the habit, on all sides, of "speaking the truth in love."* There are few of us who have any strong conviction of any truths, who are not willing enough to *speaking* the truth. There seems, especially to the young, to be a kind of dishonesty and unfaithfulness in not speaking out our convictions. But we are not equally ready to obey the latter part of the precept, to let *love* govern our hearts and tongues, when we endeavour to set before others what we believe to be God's truth. But it is that very absence of love which so often hinders others from receiving the truth which we may have to impart. What we say in harshness can seldom find its way to the understanding of another. Sympathy is the great road to the understanding; for the way to the understanding is mostly through the heart. Join two hearts together in mutual

love, and they will have the strongest barrier removed, to the flow of whatever truth is in the mind of one into the mind of the other. Oh, my dear brethren, that we could all learn more this beautiful lesson of speaking the truth in love !

One especial effect of our so doing would be that we should likewise learn to speak and think the truth itself more of each other. We should learn to see and love each other's excellencies, and to see less and say less of each other's defects. We should not find so often one party disparaging the good of another. We should learn to do justice to each other. In particular, we should totally unlearn and for ever reject that most unchristian habit of catching at unworthy tales respecting each other, and propagating them in the world, to the disparagement of our Church in the eyes of others, and the perpetuation of disunion and heartburnings amongst ourselves.

II. But, in order that we may be perfectly joined together in the same judgement, we must go beyond the views of our own weak selves and of each other ; we must endeavour to *attain to unity* by seeking means of *resting on the same foundation of God's own truth*. And what other means can we adopt which can be higher than those which God has himself supplied ? And what are they but *his Word and his Church, and his own one Spirit working in both ?*

1. It should be the practice of every Christian, and especially of every Christian minister, constantly to study God's Holy Word ; and to work out in practice that which in one of our collects we are taught to desire, viz., to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. And, what seems to be much forgotten, *we must study it primarily for practice, and only secondarily for knowledge of doctrines*. Our Lord has said, "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." In order, therefore, that we may know what *doctrines* are contained in the word of God, we must study that word primarily, that we may learn how to *do the will* of God.

Nor is this all. We must *will* to do the will of God : Ἐὰν τις θέλῃ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν. And if we do really will to do it, it will be our constant study and endeavour to do it. This, my younger brethren, is one great secret of the attain-

ment of truth, and therefore of unity,—to study [to] govern our own hearts and lives more and more by the will of God. In that way the Scripture will open to us, and doctrinal difficulties will clear up and disappear one after another. And, especially, be it noted that we must take duties in the order and importance which God in his word and providence has given them. We must learn first to do our duties as men, or we shall never be able to do our Christian duties; and we must learn to do our duties as men and Christians in our daily life, or we shall never learn to do our duties as Christ's ministers.

2. But it is essential to our finding God's own truth in his word, *that we should not neglect, but diligently use that other means of his own appointment, His Holy Church*; on which he has bestowed that exalted title of "the pillar and ground of the truth." We see what wild work has been made all around us by those who have neglected that means. We see that those amongst them who have preserved any portion of truth, have done it on the principle of handing on that which they have received in and through the church. Let us learn a lesson from these important facts, and use God's Church as the means, next to his word, of knowing his truth; and the surest means, in doubtful cases, of knowing what is the truth which his word conveys: and the more so, as the articles of religion to which we ourselves have subscribed declare that the Church "hath authority in controversies of faith."

And first, we shall naturally go to our own branch of the Church. That must have primary authority with us, because practically it is to us the Catholic Church; for it is that branch of the Catholic Church which has from the beginning subsisted in the land of our fathers. Besides this, it has always, even at the worst times, kept up a considerable acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; and at two great crises of its existence, it has carefully searched both the Scriptures and the records of the Church to the very beginning. It has sifted out the errors of superstition and of unrestrained inquiry, and has built on the foundation of the double testimony of the Holy Word and of the Catholic Church before it became disunited. A body such as this, then, co-ordinate in time and in authority with

the most ancient churches,—and which has united within itself in a remarkable manner the elements both of transmitted teaching and of careful investigation, combined with human learning, together with unsurpassed practical piety,—possesses the strongest claims upon our reverence.

Let us then, my dear brethren, avail ourselves cordially of this invaluable instrument. Let us not elevate ourselves into judges of our Church, but reverentially look up to her authority. Let us not bring preconceived and modern theories to pervert her language, either on the side of a supposed catholicism, or a supposed spirituality, or a supposed rationalism; but let us search out fairly her real doctrines,—in her Prayer-book,—in her Articles,—in that especial Homily to which our articles refer us,—in the writings of those divines whose praise is acknowledged by us,—especially in the great Fathers of the Reformation, both those who put it in motion and those whom God gave us down to the time when the Reformation may be regarded as settled.

And as these great men themselves established their faith by an appeal to the writings of the early, undivided church,—so let us accustom ourselves to the same authority: the more especially as it is in theory recognized by all the other ancient churches. For surely it is a sound principle, that what we find recognized near to the Apostles, what we find taught and practised by the whole church at an early period,—what we likewise find has been preserved in the Church to this day,—must be that system of truth which was once for all delivered to the saints; and which came from Christ, the King of saints. Thus shall we act in the spirit of those passages of the New Testament which teach us that God's truth is first received from him, and then handed on by those authorized by him. "I delivered unto you that which *I also received*:" "which also *ye have received*, and wherein *ye stand*." "Hold fast the form of sound doctrine which *thou hast heard* of me." "The things, which *thou hast heard* of me among many witnesses, the same *commit thou* to faithful men, who shall be able to *teach others also*." Almost every one both receives and hands on some form of doctrine: let us be careful that

that which we receive and hand on is not some doctrine of modern invention, either beyond or below the truth, but the very doctrine which the Apostles delivered and their successors transmitted. When the Word of God itself, either through our ignorance, or through the obscurity cast around it by modern interpretations, fails to yield us clear meanings,—to what guidance can we have recourse on which we can so much rely, as the voice of the early united Church? And what standard can afford so high a probability of uniting us all in one? Nor let it startle us, if we find that their theology differs much in character from that of modern days. We must not, if we would be learners, set up our own mental taste as a standard by which to try our teachers. We must be satisfied of their capability, and then be guided by them. And believe me, that if we do so we shall find that we have entered on a theology deeper and fuller than any which modern schools of any description have laid down,—a theology which will harmonize all parts of scripture, and give their plain and proper meaning to them all,—which will harmonize our own formularies, where some would regard them as being discordant with each other,—which will throw light upon knotty problems of moral philosophy,—and which will lead us to a practical spiritual life, in accordance with all these formularies, in accordance with the whole scripture, in accordance, likewise, with all the facts of our moral being.

In this way, my dear brethren, by adopting a standard of scripture interpretation external to ourselves, a standard recognized by all the great men of our own Church, a standard recognized in theory by all ancient churches, and made use of by modern communities, so far as it serves their ends, (especially in controversies concerning the Lord's day and infant baptism,) a standard recognized in all ages of the church,—we may hope to arrive at Christ's own truth, and build upon that truth a unity unattainable in any other way.

3. But diversities of opinion arises in observances of worship as well as in doctrine, and in these days they appear to cause even more heart-burning than diversities of doctrine; and may we not hope to find some rule in this case likewise by which we may abide?

Surely it must be a good rule here also to sink our self-seeking and individuality ; for what has the individual as such to do in joint and common worship ? Surely we ought to abstain carefully from introducing into the common worship of God our own peculiar tastes and likings, our own peculiar gestures, our own carelessness and want of reverence. Surely we ought to seek to know what our Church expects from us, and carefully and strictly observe it. Does not the word of God command us to obey them that have the rule over us in the things of our souls ? and what shall we say for ourselves, if in our carelessness and self-will we obey not the authority of our Bishops and Pastors, embodied in well considered rules, and thus divide ourselves from those who dutifully obey ? Our Blessed Lord himself acted on that principle ; for he observed the Feast of the Dedication, a feast which rested only on human sanction. He observed the rules of synagogue worship, which was simply an ordinance of the Jewish Church : and if we claim to be His people, still more if we claim to love Him, we must follow his example and drink into His spirit.

And the same spirit will lead us to observe not only positive rules of the Church, but also her ancient customs, especially those of whose beginning we can give no account. There may be a difference of opinion whether such a particular custom is an ancient one, and generally received in our Church ; but surely such customs when known should not be lightly cast aside. We are commanded in the Scripture itself to hold fast the traditions which the Apostles delivered, not only by writing, but also by word\* : and how know we whether those customs whose beginning we cannot trace may not have been dictated by the Apostles themselves ? We may not see the reasonableness of them ; but many others have felt that they were edifying,—that they either taught them holy thoughts and feelings they had not before, or helped them better to express and deepen in their souls what they had ; and we, if we adopt them in the same child-like spirit of reverence and desire for unity, shall have the same experience. There may, as I have said, be difference of opinion as to what are ancient and approved customs. Natives of a colony, where the Church had almost died out,

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\* Sec. 2, Thess. i., 15.



and where it was difficult even to keep the essentials, may not be well acquainted with them; but if we are desirous of ascertaining what they are, we shall surely find little difficulty in so doing.

4. But whilst I thus plead for adherence to our old customs as a bond of unity, I desire again to urge with the most forcible persuasion the folly of introducing new methods, new observances, new gestures, merely because they seem to the individual, whether minister or private worshipper, to be the appropriate expression of his own feelings, or what in his individual opinion is most suitable. St. Paul rebukes those in his day who desired to follow their own particular tastes in public worship, saying, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God." And to indulge in such a tendency is surely the very opposite to the endeavour, to which we are bound by the most sacred obligations, to be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.

Thus, my dear brethren, have I endeavoured to speak in simplicity and godly sincerity,—not, as I trust, with words which man's wisdom teacheth, but with words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, viz., the words of God's own book, or thoughts suggested by it. It is possible that I may have been mistaken in some application of those words; but in the general spirit of that which I have addressed to you I feel I am not mistaken. Nay, I have a conviction, which every succeeding year of time only deepens, that the words I have addressed to you to-day are in every part the words of truth and soberness. And the experience I have had of parochial work in this country, (small as it is compared with that of most of my brethren of the Clergy,) convinces me that we can never meet the growing doubts of the population with mere reasoning, and with what appears to them to be merely our own interpretations of Scripture, which are of no more weight with them than their own. We must, I am assured, bring before their minds some *external* authority, to which our judgments bow, and to which we may reasonably expect them to submit their own: and to what can we appeal out of ourselves and our own interpretations of God's word, but to the testimony of

Christ's Church, both in her earliest ages, before she was divided, and as it has been continued to the present day. *There* is something which all may agree to respect. *There* is something to which all appeal when they can. *There* is something which may be ascertained with far less difficulty than we should find in investigating conflicting interpretations of Scripture: and *there* is something on which the mind always can rest and rely, which has once fairly accepted it.

And if we can thus come to agree more amongst ourselves, and to speak in love to others the truth to which we have attained, and to look at our agreements more than our differences,—may we not hope that we shall become more earnestly united in seeking the salvation of those in communion with us? May we not hope that the holy fire will spread amongst us,—that an increasing spirit of Christian love, and Christian purity, and Christian large-heartedness may prevail; and that our own people may believe with a more practical faith:—that the same spirit of unity may spread into the denominations external to us; that reunion after reunion may take place;—that we may in time go forth to the heathen a united organization, and that *through our unity the world may at length believe in our common Lord and Saviour.*

And if this is too fair a vision to realize in our own day, will it not comfort us on the bed of death and rejoice our hearts in the place of our happy rest, if we can humbly look back and believe that in our poor way we have done our part towards that happy consummation?

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